

PLAN FOR UNIVERSAL DOWNGRADING  
of  
MILITARY DOCUMENTS

NOTE: This plan is designed to expedite and simplify the reduction of current classification of documents on hand, in order that the correct classification can be achieved without the expenditure of many thousand man-hours. Initially, it is desired that all War Department agencies indicate concurrence or recommend changes or exceptions. The final War Department plan will then be presented to U. S. Navy and Allied Powers for acceptance or modification.

1. All cryptographic material, including incoming and outgoing messages, will remain in its present classification. The safeguarding of cypher systems is a continuing function, and, notwithstanding, message content will not be downgraded. Hence the provisions of this plan do not apply to cryptographic items.

2. All documents now classified Top Secret and dated prior to 1 October 1945 will be examined by originator and will be downgraded to conform with current significance. It is assumed that by 1 October new documents will be classified according to peacetime standards, and no downgrading will be necessary. Originators will distribute a list of all their Top Secret Documents to all original addressees announcing the new classification. Every effort will be made to reach Restricted or lower in this downgrading. This list will be in the hands of addressees by 1 November 1945. All Top Secret files will be reclassified accordingly by 15 November 1945.

3. All documents now classified Secret or Confidential and dated prior to 1 October 1945 will be automatically downgraded to Restricted on 1 January 1946. On this date, all repositories containing Secret or Confidential documents will be labeled as follows:

All Documents Herein  
are Classified Restricted  
Effective 1 January 1946

In order to conserve labor, documents will remain unchanged until the occasion arises for their use. Upon being extracted from the newly designated "Restricted File," documents will automatically be stamped as follows:

RESTRICTED  
This document is reclassified  
effective 1 January 1946  
pursuant to authority . . . . .

4. According to this plan all documents originating on or after 1 October 1945 are not to be downgraded. All documents dated prior to 1 October 1945 except Top Secret documents become Restricted. All Top Secret documents will be reclassified and posted accordingly by 15 November 1945.

5. Consideration will be given at a later date to downgrading the Restricted material. At this time, however, the purpose of the plan is to reduce classification to a realistic level and still retain military control over military documents.